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Title: Regarding railway line for Sikkim.

SHRI NAKUL DAS RAI (SIKKIM): Sir, I would like to raise an important issue with regard to new railway lines in the State of Sikkim. Laying of railway line is not only important for the State of Sikkim, but also is important for the whole nation because Sikkim is strategically located, surrounded by countries like China, Nepal and Bhutan. If railways lines are laid through funneling, it would help for the development of state and in promotion of tourism in the State and would also extend a pathway for easy movement of the army through that area.

It was a declared aim of the UPA Government to connect the State capitals of the country with railways. I had raised the issue of connecting Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, with the rest of India by Railways during the last Budget Session, but I did not find a positive answer to this.

Sir, I had also requested the hon. Railway Minister for employment of Sikkimese people in the Railways through special recruitment drives considering the backwardness of the area. But this also has not been done by the Railway Department so far. A large number of people are working in the Railways but not a single person from the State of Sikkim has found employment in the Railways. If job opportunities are provided to these people living in the far and remote areas of the country, then they would feel much more integrated to the nation. Therefore, I would, once again, like to urge upon the hon. Minister to kindly consider these matters.